



UMRR Program IL, IA, MO, MN, WI - Upper Mississippi River Restoration

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Location

The program includes the Upper Mississippi River between the Twin Cities, Minnesota and the mouth of the Ohio River, the Illinois Waterway, and small portions of tributaries that have commercial navigation channels.

State(s)

IA, IL, MN, MO, WI

Congressional District(s)

IA-2, IA-4, IL-11, IL-13, IL-14, IL-15, IL-16, IL-17, IL-18, IL-2, IL-3, MN-1, MN-7, MO-6, WI-1, WI-2, WI-3, WI-5, WI-6

Status

The Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program (formally known as the Environmental Management Program) consists of two primary program elements: 1) habitat rehabilitation projects, and 2) systemic monitoring and research. The Program was authorized by the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986, as amended, and is recognized as the first large river ecosystem restoration and scientific monitoring program in the nation. One of the major strengths of the Program is a robust regional Partnership of five states, five federal agencies, many NGO's, and strong public support. Over the past 30 years, the Program has completed several major initiatives. These include: three Reports to Congress, the Habitat Needs Assessment, two Status and Trends Reports, two Habitat Restoration Manuals, a UMRR Program Strategic Plan, two UMRR Program LTRM element Strategic Plans, development of an explicit approach to Adaptive Management, and the continuous practice of implementing, evaluating, and improving UMRR management and technical procedures. Brief overview of FY15 activities: 1) the Program developed a vision statement that includes increasing the resilience and health of the UMRS, 2) development of tools to measure progress towards accomplishing the Vision, 3) initiated a major revision to its website, 4) the development of a systemic Program data base, 5) development of a Operational Plan for the Program, 6) completion of one habitat project, 7) continued construction on eight habitat projects, 8) initiation of construction on two new habitat projects, 9) continued planning and design on 20 habitat projects, 10) development of a new aquatic vegetation model, 11) providing seamless LiDAR and bathymetric data, 12) collection of the annual systemic data on key environmental attributes of the UMRS, and 13) initiation of several important research efforts.

Description

The Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program (UMRR Program) consists of two primary elements: (1) habitat rehabilitation projects and (2) systemic monitoring and research. The program was re-authorized by WRDA 99. Some of the key provisions that were included in reauthorization were that: 1) it established a continuing authority for the program, 2) increased the total authorized annual funding amount from \$19,000,000 to \$33,170,000, 3) required the program to submit reports to Congress every six years to document progress and evaluate the program and its accomplishments, identify systemic habitat needs, and recommend adjustments as needed, and 4) increased the cost share formula for non-federal sponsors from 25% to 35% for habitat restoration projects. UMRR was the first environmental restoration and monitoring program undertaken on a large river system in the United States. UMRR has pioneered many new and innovative engineering and planning techniques for ecosystem restoration in large river systems. In addition, the science element of the UMRR has developed state-of-the-art techniques to monitor and conduct research on the river. Scientific monitoring, engineering design, and environmental modeling techniques have been shared throughout the United States and in more than five countries.

Additional information on the UMRR can be found at the following website:

<http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Missions/EnvironmentalProtectionandRestoration/UpperMississippiRiverRestoration.>

The UMRR was initially authorized by the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986 and has come to be recognized as the single most important effort committed to ensuring the viability and vitality of the Upper Mississippi River System (UMRS) diverse and significant fish and wildlife resources since establishment of the National Wildlife Refuges on that system in the 1920's. This systemic program provides a well-balanced combination of monitoring and research, along with habitat restoration activities. Program accomplishments to date include: (1) the completion of 55 habitat restoration projects benefiting approximately 105,000 acres of riverine and floodplain habitats; 35 additional projects are in various stages of construction and design, these will benefit another 87,000 acres of habitat when implemented); (2) the collection of millions of data samples on key environmental attributes of the UMRS (primarily fish, water quality, vegetation, and invertebrates) and applied research that is leading to enhanced understanding of the dynamics of large floodplain rivers and successful multi-purpose resource management; (3) the development of extensive digital systemic data bases, mapping products, and establishment of an information clearinghouse through which UMRS data and information can be universally accessed; and (4) a partnership of unparalleled dimensions between a multitude of federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the general public.

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The 3rd partnership-based Report to Congress on this program was completed in December 2010. This report documented the program accomplishments to date and recommended that the Program be continued to serve the ecosystem restoration and resource monitoring needs on the Upper Mississippi River Reach. The Report to Congress concluded that the UMRR-EMP authority should be amended to specifically allow nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to serve as non-federal sponsors of HREPs. Such a provision is consistent with other Corps of Engineers' ecosystem restoration authorities, would help leverage scarce resources, and would offer a potentially more efficient approach to accomplishing projects that involve land acquisition. The UMRRP is currently working on its 4th Report to Congress which is due in December of 2016.

The Report to Congress also concluded that funding for the operation and maintenance (O&M) of HREPs should be coordinated in annual federal budgets to ensure that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has the resources needed to operate and maintain the growing inventory of HREPs on the refuge lands it manages. In addition to being a key program partner, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is also the sponsor of nearly 70% of all constructed habitat restoration projects and as such is responsible for the operations and maintenance for many of the Programs restoration projects.

Summarized Project Costs

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| Authorized Federal Cost Per Year (Habitat Restoration element)* | \$22,750,000 |
| Authorized Federal Cost Per Year (Long Term Monitoring and science element)* | \$10,420,000 |
| Total Authorized Amount for the entire UMRR Program | \$33,170,000 |

*WRDA99 authorized the transfer up 20% of the amounts appropriated between the two elements of the UMRR Program.

Additional Project Information

The UMRR Program will continue to serve as a national model for riverine ecosystem evaluation and enhancement. The past and future success of this program can be attributed to the active involvement and strong support from Congress, state and federal resource agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the general public. Re-authorization was supported by all five state governors; federal, state, and local agencies; and many non-governmental organizations. Additional Congressional Districts: MN-8, MN-3, MN-4, MN-5, MN-2, MN-6; IL-12; MO-1, MO-2, MO-3, MO-8. Program was formerly known as the Upper Mississippi River System Environmental Management Program (UMRS-EMP).

Major Work Item (This Fiscal Year)

FY 2016: The FY16 appropriation for UMRR Program will allow the Program to construction on 4 habitat rehabilitation projects, initiate construction on one project, and initiate or continue planning, engineering and/or design on 7 projects. In addition, the Program will continue developing the systemic seamless LiDAR and bathymetric coverage. In addition, it will support collection and analysis of key environmental attributes the UMRS at six field stations in five states. It will also support applied research that is designed to enhance the Program's overall capability to increase resiliency and health of the UMRS and monitor progress towards increasing health and resiliency. The UMRR Program has a long history of engaging the public and this will continue. In addition, continuation of work to fully operationalize the explicit approach for the use of adaptive management procedures. The UMRR Program completed a Strategic Plan which includes adoption of a vision to make the UMRS more resilient and healthier and to develop tools to help measure progress towards meeting the Vision. All aspects of the Program will be coordinated to ensure that they directly contribute to advancing the Program Vision. In addition, the UMRR Program will continue developed the website and regional projects data base.

Major Work Item (Next Fiscal Year)

FY 2017: The proposed budget for UMRR Program will allow for significant progress to be made in both the Program elements. The FY17 funds will be used to complete construction on one habitat project, initiate construction on one habitat project, and continue construction on five habitat projects. This will allow the program to continue planning, engineering and/or design of one project. It will also provide funding sufficient to accomplish base monitoring to track systemic trends in water quality, fish, and submerged aquatic plants for the UMRS and conduct six research efforts that will help to enhance habitat rehabilitation efforts. The UMRR Program has a long history of engaging the public and this effort will continue. In addition, funding will allow for completion of the 2016

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UMRR Program's 2016 Report to Congress, implement portions of the Strategic Plan, and continue to operationalize the integration of adaptive management procedures into the formulation of habitat projects.

Authority Details

Section 1103 of WRDA 1986, as amended.

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